



Rock Talk

The Official Newsletter of the Withlacoochee Rockhounds

President's Message



Musings, Updates, and More from Club President - Judith Birx

Fellow members of the Withlacoochee Rockhounds,
Our next meeting is scheduled to be held on Wednesday,
October 13th 2021 at 7:00pm.

See below.

The CDC has recommended that we wear our masks again even if we are vaccinated.

Since we are following the CDC guidelines we will be requiring our members to wear their masks at the next club meeting, please!

As always, we are following the current guidelines for the safety of all of us!

We view this as a temporary situation.

We will take this one step at a time.

At our October meeting, Dave Davis will be doing a presentation on Flint Knapping. Be sure to attend.

Remember, our annual Gem Show is coming up soon.

The show will be held December 3rd, 4th and 5th.

The Gem Show is a huge draw for lovers of gems and minerals, and a great resource for us to get the word out about our club.

We are still in need of volunteers to help with various duties at the show. Please be sure to contact myself or Ralph Barber to let us know you can help. Information about the Show, if you need it, and flyers you can download and print out are available on the club's website [HERE](#)

This Month's Roundup of Stories

- President's Message
- Secretary's Report
- HUGE Nephrite Jade
- Opalized Fossil
- Cookie Monster Geode
- RIP Gary Spurlock
- Bench Tips

We will be having our 50/50 at the next meeting and I do want to express that the 50/50 is a way for our club to increase club funds as well as yours! So, be sure to play!!

Additionally, our good friends at the Pinellas Geological Society, Inc. are having their 45th Annual Gem, Mineral and Jewelry Show & Sale. The show will be January 14th-16th, 2022.

Friday, the 14th and Saturday, the 15th are from 10AM to 5PM, and Sunday, the 16th is from 12PM to 5PM.

Admission is \$2.00. They will be having the show at the Central Park Performing Arts Center, which is located at 105 Central Park Drive, Largo, FL

If you have any questions or concerns please contact me, Judith Birx, at 352-587-1702. I want to thank you for your support!

Hope to see you at the next Meeting!

President Judith Birx

Secretary's Report

Minutes and More from Club Secretary - Melodye Steverson

Editor's Note - As we did not have a club meeting in September, there are no Monthly Meeting Minutes, but we did have a Board of Directors meeting.

**Withlacoochee Rockhounds Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
Date 9/28/2021**

Attending Board members; Judith Birx, Mark Moore, Melodye Steverson, Janet Wheeler, Ralph Barber, Roberta Oldread, Lynn Walters and Michael Steverson.

Board meeting started at 6:45pm and was held via the Internet on Zoom.

President Judith Birx had distributed the meeting agenda via Email.

NEW BUSINESS

President Birx questioned whether we should hold our October monthly meeting. She asked for a motion. Roberta Oldread made a motion to hold our monthly meeting in October with required face masks, seconded by Ralph Barber, passed. The majority voted to proceed with the meeting, provided that face masks are required (as recommended by the CDC) except for those with medical conditions, such as VP Mark Moore and Board member Roberta Oldread.

President Birx stated that there are many issues with the situation of the Weeki Wachee Senior Center clubhouse. The main problem is financial. The building is not supporting itself and there is no money for bills and expenditures. The well died recently and had to be re-done, which took most of the building's remaining funds. The insurance for the building has gone up substantially, as well as many of the other costs included in maintaining a building and grounds of that size. As a result, the Board of Directors for the Weeki Wachee Senior Center has decided to raise their dues to \$25 per person, starting January 1st, 2022.

It is a requirement of the Senior Center that members of all clubs must be a member of the Senior Center, as well as their chosen club.

The Senior Center dues have always been rolled into our Rockhound Club dues, which means the cost of membership, to be a member of both clubs, would be a minimum of \$35 per person. Plus the \$1 through the door charge is proposed to double in 2022 as well. They are also planning to begin charging clubs for storage, which we must have to keep using our machines.

The Weeki Wachee Senior Center Board has decided to pursue Grants and possibly a line of revolving credit, in order to maintain the facility, but as a 501c-4 may be unable to secure a grant.

In the meantime, our Board has decided to explore other options in venues and will keep our members apprised of any changes. For now we will remain where we are and will support the efforts of the Weeki Wachee Senior Center Board as they work to find a way to persevere.

NEW BUSINESS

Our next item on the agenda was the Gem Show. President Birx said "We need a committee! And we are it!" She requested information regarding the following;

- Food; Ralph Barber said he had not contacted the food vendors yet.
- Displays / set up; Ralph said he needs a list of contracted vendors and # of tables sold from Janet Wheeler. Janet said she would get that info to him.
- Programs; Programs are being sought and scheduled.

continue on page 10

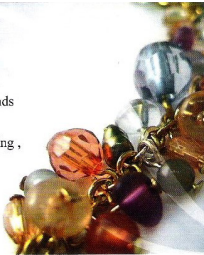


Rockhounds Advertisers

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Member of Withlacoochee Rockhounds
Judithbirx@hotmail.com
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352-587-1702



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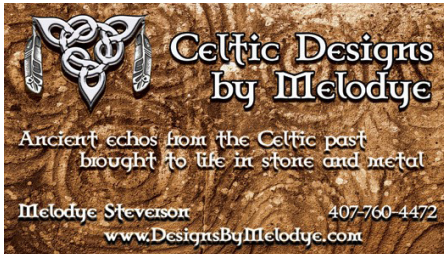
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KELLY JOHNSON

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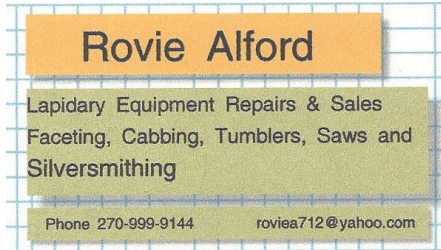
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Your Business Card Size Ad in Rock Talk

The cost for non-club members to advertise their businesses in
Rock Talk is \$10.00 per month.
Contact Michael Stevenson to set up an ad in both the newsletter and
the club website. It will benefit both
your business and our club.

If you ad has a web address, or Etsy shop address, I have linked to it.

Advertisers Are Needed

Please help us find advertisers for the Rock Talk and our website.

The monthly income from these ads is beneficial to the club.

Both the Rock Talk and our website have more exposure than only club members.

Contact club treasurer Janet Wheeler: ceecgirl@tampabay.rr.com or
send to:

Withlacoochee Rockhounds
PO Box 5634 Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634

Rockhounds unearth a righteous gemstone near Darrington

Anyone have a saw big enough to cut this thing?

It's the discovery of a lifetime — an 8-ton nephrite jade boulder.

Jason Henry was on the verge of giving up when he made the greatest geological discovery of his life. Henry, 38, a Darrington native who lives in Marblemount, spent the summer prospecting for the valuable gemstone nephrite jade near Helena Ridge, about 10 miles south of his hometown. After seeing jade from the area displayed in Darrington businesses, he was inspired to go looking for it. But coming home empty-handed was wearing him thin

Nephrite, known for its green varieties, is a form of jade created from colliding tectonic plates. It's one of the most valuable gemstones in the world, along with its counterpart, jadeite, which is most commonly found in Burma and Guatemala. "I was getting worn out," Henry said. "It got to a point where I was thinking, 'I need to find something or switch gears and put time in elsewhere.'"



On June 18, Henry followed the advice of his mentor, longtime rockhound Ed Molsee, 72, of Arlington, and tracked a vein of serpentine (a metamorphic mineral typically found near nephrite) up the ridge.

"I went up to this rock outcropping and prayed about it," Henry said. "About 200 feet past the outcropping, I looked down and there was a moss-covered area that looked like a rock, about 18 inches long by 12 inches wide."

He didn't know it yet, but he was looking at the top of an 8-ton boulder. He hoped it was nephrite, but he couldn't be sure until he tested it.

"I had to hit this rock about 100 times before I broke a chip off," he said. "I knew during the process of breaking it that it was likely jade."

This is an excerpted portion of the article.

Read the entire article here at HeraldNet.com



Gemstone Turns Out to Be Fossil of an Unknown Dinosaur

From the Land Down Under

A new kelpie-sized dinosaur has been identified in the Lightning Ridge opal fields, 100 million years after it roamed prehistoric floodplains.

A new dinosaur has been added to the more than 700 already named after a chance discovery of a jawbone fragment in a bucket of opal rubble from near Lightning Ridge, New South Wales.

The kelpie-sized reptile, which lived in the Cretaceous Period about 100 million years ago, has been dubbed *Weewarrasaurus pobeni* – a name that recognises the fossil's unearthing in the Wee Warra opal field, and honours Mike Poben, an Adelaide-based opal buyer who donated the specimen for research.

It is the first new dinosaur to be named in NSW in nearly a century.

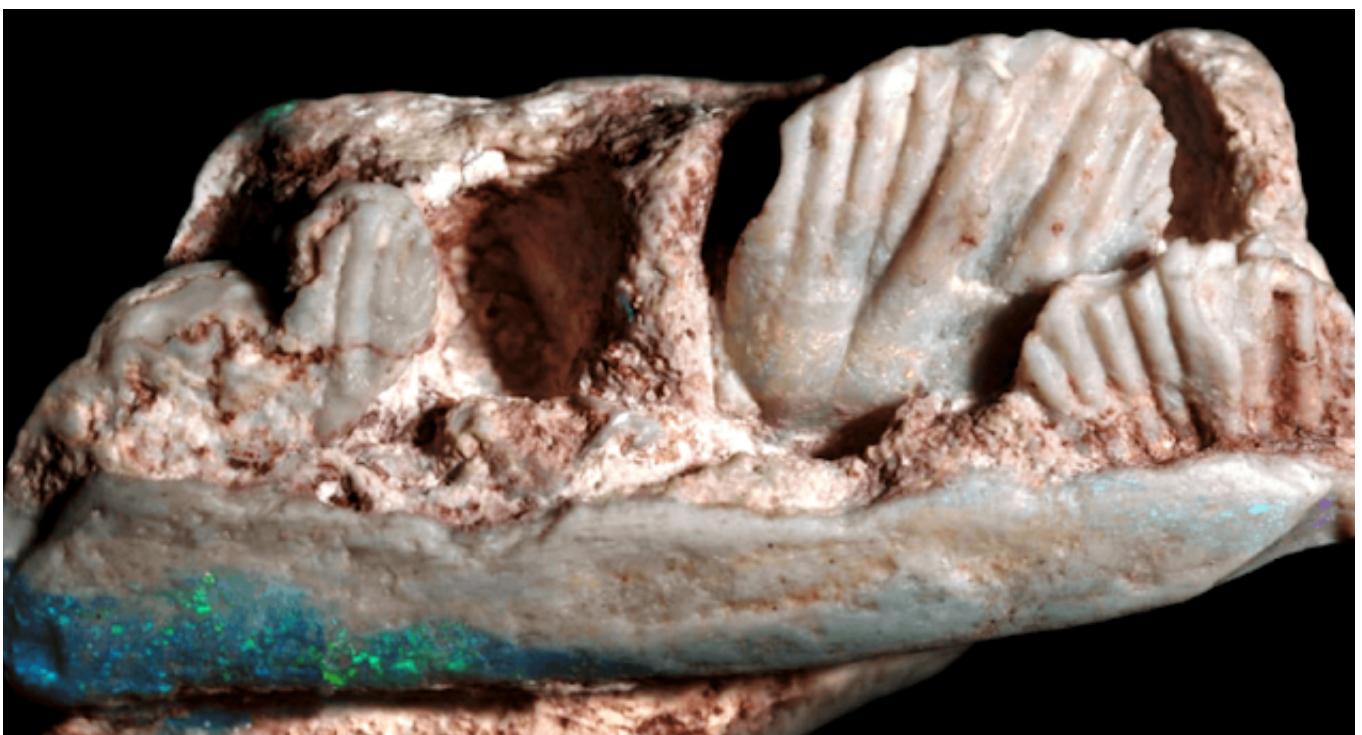
Weewarrasaurus was an ornithomimid dinosaur, part of a group of small plant-eating species that moved around on two legs and that were particularly abundant on the ancient floodplains that covered the region 100 million years ago.

Like all fossils from the Lightning Ridge opal mines, the lower jaw—the only piece of the animal recovered—is preserved in opal. Precious opal gives off a rainbow of colours, in this case shimmering green and blue.

Lightning Ridge is the only place in the world where dinosaur bones routinely turn to opal.

Palaeontologist Dr Phil Bell from the University of New England in Armidale, who led the research, said, "I remember Mike showing me the specimen and my jaw dropped. I had to try hard to contain my excitement, it was so beautiful".

Read the entire article here at GeologyIn.com



Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Membership Form

2021

Annual Dues: New individual member, \$25.00. Under 18 years of age, \$5.00. No charge for paid 2020 members who are renewing for 2021. Returning members from 2019, \$20.00 (\$5.00 discount) for 2021 membership

☐

Check if returning member

☐

Check if current member
with change of information

☐

Check if new member

☐

Check if under 18

Please Print Clearly

Last name

First Name

Street Address:

City

State

ZIP

Phone Number (s)

Email address:

You may now fill in the fields on this form if you are viewing it on your computer or tablet.
Each field may be clicked on and then you may type in your information.
You will still need to print out the form, but your added information should show on the

Give this completed form along with your check for dues made out to "Withlacoochee Rockhounds" to club secretary Janet Wheeler at a club meeting. Or mail the form and your check to:

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

PO Box 5634

Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634

Renewing 2020 members : No charge for 2021 membership. Please fill out form and give it to club secretary Janet Wheeler or send it to the above address.

2021

Geologists Discover Agate With Cookie Monster Hidden Inside When Split Open

Me want cookie!!

Gems and geodes have ways of surprising us. From rainbow crystals to heart-shaped amethysts, these rocks prove you can never be too sure about what you'll find when you crack them open. One of the latest unexpected discoveries is a pair of Cookie Monster twins in an agate from Brazil. Gem collector Mike Bowers, with the help of Lucas Fassari, unearthed the rock that the famed Sesame Street character was hiding within. The resemblance to the beloved puppet is uncanny—down to the blue face, goofy grin, and large googly eyes.

The rare Muppet mineral was concealed in a small, egg-shaped volcanic rock. It gave no indication that once split open, there would be two flawless recreations of Cookie Monster clad in sapphire quartz.

To announce this fabulous find, Bowers did a reveal video on Instagram set to the now-iconic song "C is for Cookie" sung by the king of confections himself.

For now, Bowers is keeping the Cookie Monsters all to himself. But if and when he does choose to sell the quirky pair, he's looking at a lot of cookies. Due to the rare stone and the resemblance to the character, people have been willing to pay upwards of \$10,000 for a chance to own the set.

Read the entire article here at [MyModernMet.com](https://www.mymodernmet.com)



Gary Spurlock - R.I.P.

It is with great sorrow that we must announce that our Rockhound club member Mr. Gary Spurlock has passed. He has had serious health issues during the last year and recently was entered into hospice care.

He was very active community leader in local historic preservation and was the director of the 1885 Brooksville Railroad Depot and was a current board member of the Hernando Historic Museum Society.

He was a former resident of California before moving to Florida.



Our most sincere condolences to the Spurlock family.

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Our monthly club meeting is held at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Club, 3357 Susan Dr., Spring Hill, FL 34606, on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 7:00 to 9:00 PM



www.withlacoocheerockhounds.com

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or send to: Withlacoochee Rockhounds
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Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Purpose

We are a non-profit organization whose purpose is to foster interest and promote knowledge of minerals, gems, fossils, lapidary arts, and earth sciences, through regular meetings, informative programs, workshops, and field trips. PLUS, our annual gem, mineral and jewelry show.

Membership is open to anyone sharing such interests.

Dues

Dues are \$25.00 annually for adults, and \$5.00 for children under 18 years of age.

Club Meeting Location and time

Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center, 3357 Susan Dr in Spring Hill. The meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00PM

2021 Club Officers and Appointees

President	Judith Birx	352.587.1702	judithbirx@hotmail.com
Vice President	Mark Moore	352.586.9607	markles2021@gmail.com
Secretary	Melodye Steverson	352.683.9496	melodye@designsbymelodye.com
Treasurer	Janet Wheeler	727.938.3644	ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com
Rock Talk Editor	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	highlander56@gmail.com
Club Webmaster	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	highlander56@gmail.com
Mailing Reporter	Janet Wheeler	727.938.3644	ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com
Gem Bag Coordinator	Gloria DuPont	352.848.5199	ddupont@tampabay.rr.com
Audio/Visual Coordinator	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	highlander56@gmail.com

Board of Directors

Judith Birx (President)	Mark Moore (Vice President)	Melodye Steverson (Secretary)	Janet Wheeler (Treasurer)
Roberta Oldread (2020)	Lynn Walters (2021)	Ginny Steverson (2021)	Michael Steverson (2021 appointed)
			Ralph Barber (Past President)

Help Save William Holland School

For those of you that have not heard, the William Holland School of Lapidary Arts, aka William Holland Retreat, has decided to cancel their entire 2021 season due to the pandemic.

They plan to re-open for the 2022 season.

This school has meant a lot to many of our members over the years and now they are struggling to maintain their building and grounds without their normal revenue stream from students. If you're interested in helping, they have an auction every Tuesday and a sale on Wednesday. You can get slabs, cabochons, findings, tools, books and completed jewelry as well. These are on their Facebook pages. Just look up William Holland School on Facebook and I'm sure you can find them. They also offer videos of their teachers doing demos and classes, so you can learn from the site as well!

You can help the school and get great stuff at a good price at the same time. Check it out!



Bench Tips from Brad Smith

Brad Smith's *Bench Tips* are a monthly feature of Rock Talk

LAYOUT TOOLS

Dimensions on some features of a design can be fluid while others must be accurate for the design to work. When precision on a piece is important, good layout techniques are essential.

These are the tools that I rely upon to get holes in the right place, to achieve correct angles, and to cut pieces the correct length.

I like crisp sharp lines to follow, so I often coat surfaces with a dark marker and scribe my layout lines onto the metal. A square makes quick work of checking right angles or marking where to cut, and the thin center punch helps me mark a place to drill holes exactly where I want them.

Finally, a good set of dividers is probably my favorite layout tool. They let me quickly mark a strip for cutting, swing an arc, and divide a line or curve into as many equal segments as I need. I keep at least one set of dividers in every toolbox.

INVENTORY RECORD

In an ideal world each of us who sells their jewelry has a good record with photos of all pieces in our inventory. We use it for insurance purposes, to record the cost to produce, to note where the item was sent out on consignment, and maybe to store descriptive text for marketing. Eventually, we note in the record when the piece was sold and for how much.

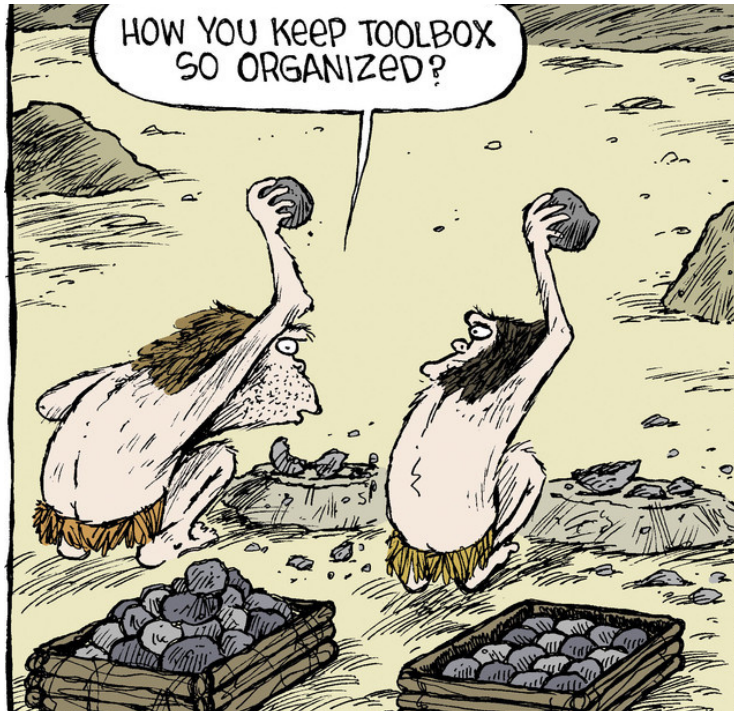
It's nice to also have good pictures of each piece, but sometimes we don't have time for a full-on photo session. In situations like this it's worth doing a quick group shot with the help of a phone, a camera, a scanner, or even a color copier. The quality is at least sufficient for an accurate identification in case a piece is lost.



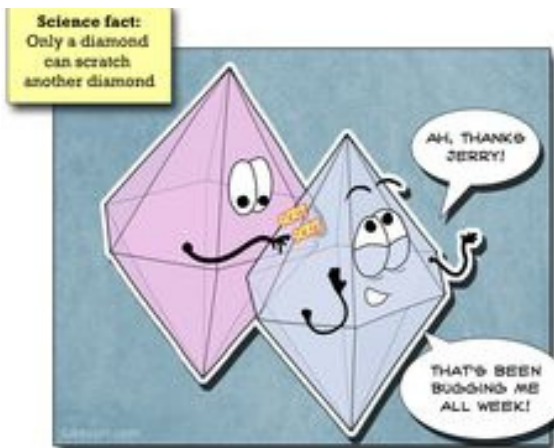
Learn New Skills with Brad's "How To Do It" Books

[Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith](https://www.amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith)

Rock Talk Funny Papers



The jeweler gives the cake a more brilliant cut.



Secretary's Report - Continued from page 2

- Dealer applications; Sent to vendors. President will send to other clubs.
- Advertising; President Birx read her list of potential ways to advertise our Gem Show and assigned various ones to Board members to investigate. These include SFMS, The Scene, Sun Coast News, Bay News 9, Chanel 8, Facebook, NextDoor, Craig's List, and Facebook Marketplace. Our Show will also be listed in Rock & Gem magazine.
- Children's Programs; Lynn Walters will provide a table with items and information of interest to kids. There will be a free bag of rocks for each child and there may be a rock ID table as well.
- Door Workers; President Birx has a sign up sheet for volunteers.
- Flyers; Board member Michael Stevenson agreed to have 400 flyers printed for distribution.
- Signs / Wristbands; In our Storage Facility and ready for use.

Our next Board meeting will be on 10/19 at 6:30pm, on ZOOM.

The meeting ended at 7:50pm.

Respectfully submitted by Secretary Melodye Stevenson



From The Editor

Hello to all Withlacoochee Rockhounds

It is I, your friendly neighborhood editor again.

As you will have seen in your e-mail regarding the next club meeting, and in the Presidents Message, our October meeting is a go. If this schedule should change at all, you will be notified by your e-mail we have on file, and on our club website.

We continue to follow the latest CDC guidelines, and the CDC is advising that vaccinated AND non-vaccinated individuals wear facemasks when gathering indoors. We are wanting to keep everyone COVID-free. So, PLEASE wear your mask when you are attending the next meeting.

If you would like to place a business card ad in the newsletter, please feel free to contact me, and we'll get you added to next available issue.

Additionally, if any of you have not received your newsletter or are not receiving my e-mail blasts (meetings, rock sales, etc.), *please* check your spam folder. If you still are not receiving them, please contact me and let's make sure I have your correct e-mail address.

As noted in previous issues of Rock Talk, I have created for the club a Google My Business account. Doing this, when someone searches for "lapidary clubs near me", or "rockhounds near me", we will come up in their search. Now that this is live, I am asking again, if you would, please search for "Withlacoochee Rockhounds", and when you see our listing to the right side of the page in Google, please use the "Write a Review" link and give the club a good review. It helps with search engine results. Which means more people find us, and we hopefully acquire new members. It's a win-win! Likewise, if you have not done so, please subscribe to our YouTube Channel. YouTube is the second largest search engine on the internet. People are finding us by it.

Our club is getting better every day, and we now have the new logo we spoke of in previous newsletters. I have been incorporating it into other club documents. In addition, we are researching how soon we can also patches created with the new logo. With that new logo, I have created new t-shirts, and a tote bag for the club. As with the present shirts, these shirts are available on Amazon. I sent out an e-mail recently with the link to the new merch. You may also find the new shirts on our club website, on the [Club T-Shirts page](#). Get yourself some new club gear to wear! Look around the meeting, you will probably see a member wearing our new club gear!

Our Board would like our members to come up with suggestions for Programs to be presented at our monthly meetings. What would you like to see? What would you like to learn? What would you like to know? Is there something you'd like to teach or present? You can help our club expand it's educational repertoire. We'd love to hear from you all.

Contact any Board member or bring your written suggestions to a meeting.

Rock On!!!

Club Phone Number - 352.587.2714

Warning to Withlacoochee Rockhound Members

During the last several months, illicit requests have been sent to members of various clubs in the US, including the Withlacoochee Rockhounds, asking members to purchase gift cards that would be used as donations to various organizations.

These are SCAMS.

Be advised that our club has never and will never ask members to buy gift cards or provide any form of monetary funds to anyone or any organization by phone call, email, or any other method of communication.